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Viewing cable 09QUITO704, FM FALCONI ON ECUADOR-COLOMBIA RELATIONS, US BASE

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09QUITO704**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09QUITO704	2009-08-07 15:53	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Quito

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/09/1/1355/cable-219977.html>

VZCZCXYZ0352
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0704/01 2191553
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 071553Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0728
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8298
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4240
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3666
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG LIMA 3348
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 4537
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RHEFHLC/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000704

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SNAR](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: FM FALCONI ON ECUADOR-COLOMBIA RELATIONS, US BASE
ACCESS IN COLOMBIA.

id: 219977
date: 8/7/2009 15:53
refid: 09QUITO704
origin: Embassy Quito
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination:
header:
VZCZCXYZ0352
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHQT #0704/01 2191553
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 071553Z AUG 09
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0728
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 8298
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 4240
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----- header ends -----

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 000704

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: TWENTY YEARS
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [SNAR](#) [EC](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: FM FALCONI ON ECUADOR-COLOMBIA RELATIONS, US BASE
ACCESS IN COLOMBIA.

Classified By: Ambassador Heather M. Hodges for Reasons 1.4 (b&d)

¶1. (C) At Foreign Minister Fander Falconi's request, the Ambassador met with Falconi the morning of August 5 to discuss Ecuador-Colombia relations. Also in the meeting for the Foreign Ministry were Under Secretary for Bilateral Affairs, Jorge Orbe, and North American Affairs officer Cristina Camacho. DCM accompanied the Ambassador.

¶2. (C) Although Falconi began the meeting inquiring after the status of the U.S. delegation to Correa's inauguration on August 10, his major agenda item was Colombia. He reviewed the historically good relations Ecuador has maintained with Colombia, despite the decades long conflict within Colombia which has negatively affected Ecuador with spillover across the border. Falconi stressed that Ecuador's position has always been one of non-interference in Colombia's internal affairs. Then along came "March 1" (a common way of referring to the Colombian cross-border attack on FARC at Angostura on that day in 2008). President Correa felt betrayed by President Uribe, since they had spoken that day. Since then there have been a number of attempts to arrange reconciliation, by both the OAS and Carter Center. These attempts have been useful in identifying commonalities, but were unsuccessful.

¶3. (C) Now the issue is again heating up in the media. President Correa condemns and is completely committed to investigating any supposed links between Ecuadorian officials and support to the FARC. The latest report of information from another Raul Reyes diary -- if the diary is verified -- suggests serious linkages and problems.

¶4. (C) That said, Falconi stressed that there have been substantial and positive discussions between the Colombian and Ecuadorian governments, below the level of the Presidencies. Falconi believes the relationship is ready to enter a new stage, with "more optimistic relations." The

basic Ecuadorian requirements for re-establishing diplomatic relations are known, and these can be discussed. Falconi acknowledged that finalizing a reconciliation is difficult, given media stories, or the propensity of Uribe, Foreign Minister Bermudez or Correa to harsh words. Uribe and Correa are "strong personalities."

¶15. (C) Falconi commented that they were harmed by the breakdown of the *cartilla de seguridad* (a mechanism by which the GOE and the GOC communicated border security alerts) since this considerably affected Ecuador's security on the border. He emphasized that they wanted a diplomatic resolution of the situation and certainly did not want to get involved in an *arms race*.⁸ This was not their vision. He knew that the two countries would have things they disagreed on, but with a roadmap they could have a better relationship that would provide greater trust and security. He asked that the U.S. play a role in Ecuadorian-Colombian rapprochement.

¶16. (C) As part two of the conversation, Falconi said he wanted to ask about the issue of U.S. bases in Colombia, which was causing worry in Ecuador. What would be the purpose of the bases? Falconi said he wanted to hear directly from the U.S. on this.

¶17. (C) The Ambassador concurred with Falconi that renewed positive relations with Colombia were very important, and asked after the status of efforts by the Carter Center. Falconi said that the Carter Center had been helpful in defining the common issues between Colombia and Ecuador, but that reconciliation would not work if either Ecuador or Colombia were forced into dialogue. Dialogue needs to be built, and both countries were "constructing a process of dialogue," something the U.S. government could assist with.

¶18. (C) The Ambassador noted that our involvement has only been through the OAS, and asked if Falconi had something specific in mind for a U.S. role. He did not. Turning to the issue of the non-bases in Colombia, the Ambassador pointed out that there was much exaggeration and unfounded concerns reported in the press. First, there was no agreement at the moment, just bilateral conversations with the Colombians about access to Colombian bases. Any

agreement would regularize already existing activities and practices. Of course this was related to our loss of access to the Manta Forward Operating Location (FOL), and the need to substitute coverage for the eastern Pacific. Additionally, the U.S. has shared a defense vision with Colombia for years, and the current discussions are looking at deepening our cooperation on bilateral interests, which are in Ecuador's interests as well.

¶19. (C) Falconi appeared to take the Ambassador's comments on board, but added that both Chilean President Bachelet and Brazilian President Lula had "expressed worry," as well as Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos. The Ambassador pushed back, saying that these were press reports and not necessarily accurate. In the case of Moratinos, it was highly unlikely that the Spanish, with actual U.S. bases on their soil, would be saying anything so simplistic. The Ambassador repeated that it was in Ecuador's interest that Colombia be able to fight narco-trafficking effectively.

¶110. (C) Falconi paused, but agreed, and said the problem was the need for official information from Washington. The Ambassador agreed that information was good, but it was not necessarily appropriate to share the details of our conversations with the Colombians.

¶111. (C) Falconi then turned the meeting over to the Under Secretary Orbe for a status report on the Bilateral Dialogue. Orbe summarized the proposed modification of the Dialogue, to encompass "four pillars": Security, Cooperation and Technical Assistance, Migratory Issues, and Trade and Investment. He also reviewed the proposed timetable of discussions, culminating in Washington on October 20. Orbe

noted that the GOE did not want this to be a once-a-year event and hoped to engage with the U.S. in other ways including maintaining a &strategic dialogue8 as &agreed by the two presidents at the Trinidad Summit.8 (Note: On several occasions both Falconi and Orbe have referred to an alleged conversation between Correa and President Obama in which they claim that the latter agreed to said dialogue.) The Ambassador noted that there had not been enough time to address the content of all the pillars. Nevertheless, in some areas, for instance, ideas on the content of the security pillar, there appeared to be agreement on both sides. Since Orbe had mentioned discussion of Ecuador's proposal for a Trade for Development Agreement, the Ambassador cautioned that the Dialogue was not a negotiating platform, and that the Administration did not even have trade negotiating authority in general at this point.

¶12. (C) The Ambassador brought up the current status of our agreements on cooperation with vetted units, stating that we appeared to be very close to being able to conclude agreements with DEA and DHS, which would also allow signing of the NAS agreement. However, a pending written agreement with another agency (to be discussed in septel) was looking unlikely. She said that the U.S. would be proposing renewing cooperation following an oral agreement. Falconi replied that he would do a note relaying those points to Minister of Government Jalkh, who led the GOE interagency group on this issue.

¶13. (C) Comment: This meeting was the most professional we have had with Falconi to date. He was careful and moderate with his language, and not particularly partisan. It is the first time we have heard him allow for a Correa fault, in his description of Correa's "strong personality" causing problems for the diplomatic negotiations with Colombia. On the issue of Colombia and U.S. military presence, the GOE appears genuinely worried, and this may have prompted Falconi's suggestion that the U.S. take a role in Colombia-Ecuador reconciliation, seeking to divert us from a more unilateral engagement with the Colombians. We feel it would be extremely useful to be responsive to Falconi's request for more, and preferably written, information on the DCA discussions.
HODGES

=====CABLE ENDS=====